

Message Text

SECRET

PAGE 01 LONDON 02057 041640Z
ACTION SS-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 NSCE-00 /026 W
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FM AMEMBASSY LONDON
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 0316
INFO AMEMBASSY BONN
AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS
AMEMBASSY COPENHAGEN
AMEMBASSY DUBLIN
AMEMBASSY THE HAGUE
AMEMBASSY LUXEMBOURG
AMEMBASSY PARIS
AMEMBASSY ROME
USMISSION EC BRUSSELS
USMISSION NATO BRUSSELS

S E C R E T LONDON 02057

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: XGDS-1
TAGS: PFOR, EEC, XF
SUBJECT: EC-ARAB DIALOGUE

1. IT IS CLEAR FROM CONVERSATIONS WE HAVE HAD AT FCO
(HIBBERT AND FABER) AND FROM ARTICLE IN TODAY.S
"FINANCIAL TIMES" (INSPIRED BY FABER) THAT EC STATEMENTS
TO BE MADE AT TUNIS NEXT WEEK IN FRANEWORK OF EURO-ARAB
DIALOGUE WILL CONTAIN THE SAME LANQUAQE ON PALESTINIAN
RIGHTS THAT, ACCORDING TO THE BRITISH, WAS CONTAINED IN
EC STATEMENT TO UNGA ON DECEMBER 9, 1976, AND TO WHICH
USG OBJECTED IN CONTEXT OF EC MINISTERIAL STATEMENT
JANUARY 31, 1977 (STATE 20956, PARA 6).

2. WHEN QUESTIONED, HIBBERT AND FABER EMPHASIZED TO
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US THAT THE TWO SITUATIONS WERE FUNDAMENTALLY DIS-
SIMILAR. THE STATEMENT ON THE MIDDLE EAST ADOPTED BY
THE EC FOREIGN MINISTERS JANUARY 31 REFLECTED AN EC
POLICY CONSENSUS; IN DEFERENCE TO US OBJECTIONS THAT ITS
PUBLICATION NOW WOULD BE UNTIMELY, THE EC AGREED TO HOLD
IT AS AN INTERNAL DOCUMENT. AT TUNIS, HOWEVER, THE EC
WILL NOT HAVE THE OPTION OF REMAINING SILENT. IT FEELS

BOUND BY ESTABLISHED PRECEDENT (E.G., LUXEMBOURG, MAY 1976) AND CANNOT REFUSE TO COMMENT ON THE MIDDLE EAST. MORE IMPORTANT, IT CANNOT UNDO THE HISTORICAL RECORD. IN SHORT, IT HAS "NO ROOM FOR MANEUVER."

3. FOR THESE REASONS, HIBBERT AND FABER BOTH VOICED STRONG HOPE THAT USG NOT ATTEMPT TO PERSUADE EC TO AMEND OR DELETE LANGUAGE ALREADY AGREED BY FOREIGN MINISTERS FOR USE AT TUNIS. THEY STRESSED THAT EC LANGUAGE WOULD CONTAIN NOTHING NEW AND WOULD BE UNLIKELY IN ANY EVENT TO ATTRACT MUCH PUBLIC ATTENTION.

4. COMMENT: MICHAEL WEIR IS CURRENTLY IN WASHINGTON FOR TALKS WITH STATE DEPARTMENT. IT MIGHT BE USEFUL TO EXPLORE ENTIRE MATTER FURTHER WITH HIM.

ARMSTRONG

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NNN

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